PEACE COLLEGE LITERARY MAGAZINE

PRISM

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FACES

Dark face

Hidden sorrows

How to stand

You wonder if the light will ever shine

Shaded face

Concealed pain

How to live

You wonder if the light will ever brighten

Lighted face

Suppressed feelings

How to pretend

You wonder if the light will ever go away.

Emilie G.

GOD'S MASTER PLAN

Sandy Tingle

Our heavenly father had a master plan

To have his children inhabit the land

Everything we needed he supplied

For our enjoyment, comfort and pride.

Then sinful man, he disobeyed

The instructions that the lord had given

And god in his anger put us out

Now bread to earn by the sweat of our brows

It was not intended for us to idle away

Our time on earth in laughter and play

For the lord's purpose must be carried out

Each one of us has work we must be about

Be conscious of the life you live each day

Give thanks to god and continually pray

And let us treat our fellow man

As Christ would when he walked the land

For he who had no place to rest

Came down and gave his very best

And when they nailed him to the cross

It was to save mankind from all their faults.

There is an appointment we all must keep

Every one of us it shall so seek

This dreaded thing we fear called death

Shall be powerless

As in the savior's arms we'll come to rest.

When I was thirteen I got my period for the first time. I calmly proceeded to call my mother's gynecologist to arrange for a hysterectomy appointment. Dr. Kwan, after he finished laughing, fed me some crap about how menstruation is a gift and how I should celebrate the first step in the journey of my womanhood.

A gift? I thought you were supposed to like gifts! Okay, so maybe the yarn covered coat hangers from Aunt Immogene weren't exactly a hit, but after a hug and a mumbled thank-you at least they can be thrown into the back of a closet. I certainly didn't choose to get my period, but I don't recall getting the option of pawning it or selling it on E-Bay either. But, I imagine if a period were given as a gift the scenario might happen a little something like this.

MOM: Oh! I almost forgot! (taking out package) Here's an extra-special gift for you.

GIRL: (excitedly) Gee, thanks Mom! (opens package and looks perplexed) A certificate for monthly hemorrhaging, bloating, and ill temper to be redeemed for approximately thirty years...?

MOM: That's right sweetheart, it's the gift that keeps on giving-- And don't forget about the bonus knife-like cramps in your uterus!

GIRL: (mumbling) Thanks.

It's a cruel joke if you really think about it. As if adolescence weren't enough. Growing breasts, wearing a bra, becoming bitter and jaded after the first relationship-- that can be endured. But learning how to operate maxi-pads and insert tampons? Frankly, it's just a little too much for my taste. You might think that as a woman got older having a period might become easier to handle. In all actuality, it becomes worse because, undoubtedly, nature takes its course and all women peers experience this joy in "the journey of womanhood." Have you ever been around other women who all have their period simultaneously? You are officially taking your life into your own hands because sooner or later someone is going to cry or get pimp-slapped.

STOP, DROP, AND SHOW

I've often thought that capital punishment is not efficient. Everyone complains that criminals need to be punished, not spoon-fed. If the U.S. government really wants to get information about terrorist attacks, the undercover agents and questioning from the FBI need to stop. Just stick the suspect in a padded room with eight or ten women on their periods. The odds are he'll confess-if he makes it out alive.

Another feasible method of self-defense for women is the simple process I like to call "Stop, Drop, and Show." There is a similar technique out there called "Stop, Drop, and Roll" which involves saving yourself if you were ever to experience spontaneous human combustion and catch on fire. However, my plan is much, much more important and deals with how to get rid of a man who is a stalker, murderer, or all around annoying individual. Simply "stop", "drop" whatever you might be doing at the moment, and "show" him a pad or a tampon. Nothing puts the fear of God in a man more than the sight of one of these suckers. Let's face it, most guys will have sex with just about anything that seems like it might be alive, but show them a feminine product and they are screaming and heading for the nearest bomb shelter.

So maybe this menstruating thing does have some advantages. The possibilities are endless.... I dream of a time when women everywhere can assert their leadership skills and lash out against this sexist, male-dominated society! No longer will women be content to settle for domestic abuse, lower wages, and idiotic fashion trends! We're going to rise up and demand equality! It's time to take care of business! Look out! We've got purses full of tampons and we're on a mission.

Christian Sineath

ON A THURSDAY

Toes curled in anticipation

Waiting and wanting

Eyes wide

Hopeful

There's that smile you like so much

The one that means love and truth

Feminine and round

Like me

Second helpings couldn't hurt

And you sweep me off my feet

For a soulful dance

And jazz grace

Small peals of laughter

Quiet as the sunrise

But a thousand words in each breath

Shower upon me

Hold me captive

Tear me away from all of this

Take my word for it

You'll be needed in time

Don't worry, love

I'll be here to listen

When you need me too

And I'll talk

Brooding a bit,

I'll calm in time

Toes curled in anticipation

Not a tear, love, just a laugh

And a sweet love-smile

The idea of being enveloped by you

And charmed indefinitely

Megan Brown

BETWEEN

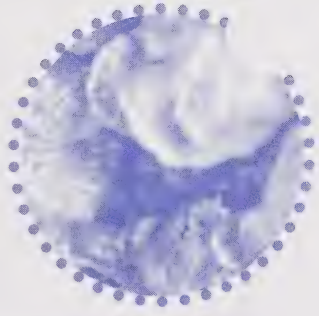
I am tired of the in between, the go between--
I want to get between
What is between the printed words and
Occasional conversation,
The handful of hours that
Defines us and binds us?
What is between the anticipation,
Disappointment, the chase and
Capture in this
Great game we are playing?
I am tired of the in between, the go
between--
I want to get between
What if you were to let me
Open you up and
Pour you out and
Soooaaak you up slowly,
Getting between like I desire?
What then would be left of the
Half-way and the
Holding back and the
Hard place that is my home?
I am so tired.
I am tired of the in between, the go
between--
I want to get between

Christian Sineath

BETWEEN

One Life's Longing

The Philharmonic Cellist
Imagines herself the Conductor.
She dreams of standing up straight
And waving about the thin baton.
The Conductor secretly wishes
To be the one to make the music.
To sit down just for once
And slide the bow across the strings.
I realize the selfishness
Of what I have called "my life" -
My birth-date to my deathdate.
To see only the melodramas
and trials That have hap-
pened to pass Before my
own eyes. Painting a portrait
Of just a single artist as a
young man - One passion,
one gender, one age. I have
wanted my life to include The
lives of every other. I have had to
come to terms with My longing to
be the whole world. Even that will
never be enough. Every era in history -
Every moment lived Since the beginning of
time onward. Slave encaged in a cubicle And
barefoot hippie Dancing on the soft grass. Farmer's wife
and Pharaoh's son. Soot-faced coal miner And paint-faced
cabaret performer. Myself, and you as you read this now. It is end-
less. To walk an infinite distance In every person's shoes. To say my blistered
feet traversed it all - A girl who will be remembered for having forgotten no
one.



Allison Merkle

She's not a super hero,

doesn't have a heart of steel,

but she will mend her bruises

and dry her tears.

She can't fly and is afraid of heights.

Many weaknesses are hers, along with many foes.

She will climb out from the rubble

though she may never stand on top.

Super powers has she none, except Womanhood.

Knowingly,

Stand proud she will with head raised and chin high

Saying, "Who cares" to those who think

She's not strong.

She's not a super hero

Doesn't have a heart of steel,

But she has mended her bruises.

And dried her tears.

Michelle Fitzgerald

"It's Raining Laughter!" Reflections of a Children's Entertainer

Whenever I go to work, I am instantaneously mobbed by masses of screeching hooligans and giggling imps. Lips part with elated shrieks of excitement and faces light up with wondering surprise after I enter a room. I am often bear-hugged by strangers and tickled by the eager, sticky fingers of toddlers. After more than a decade of performing as a clown, and nigh on ten years of receiving such reactions from others, I still feel an exhilarating thrill at the sundry of emotions that I elicit after my transformation into my alter ego, "Hazel Nut" the clown.

When I was first introduced to the wide, comedic world of clowning by my father, the 'boss clown' for my family's "Nut Family Clowns" entertainment business, I was initially hesitant to don the red nose. To be completely honest, I believed that the idea of my becoming "Bozo the Clown" or the clownish freak from one of Stephen King's horror flicks was ludicrous, to say the least. As my father handed me my very first costume, I merely laughed in his face. The enormous, bulky shoes were ridiculously cumbersome, the mismatched fabrics and ribbons were abhorrently tacky, and the rainbow-colored wig was just plain itchy. The required slapstick shenanigans, hackneyed riddles, and pratfalls seemed to provide enjoyment only for the most naïve of child spectators. Clowning was pure unadulterated torture and mortification for any entertainer, no matter how skilled he (or she) may be, and I wanted absolutely nothing to do with it.

I'd like to say that my harsh, unyielding attitude melted as soon as my red-nosed inner persona emerged, but that would be far from the truth. In actuality, my fascination with children's entertainment was entirely due to money, an ever-alluring quick buck that was the reward for my utter embarrassment and degradation. Each paycheck provided yet another key to improving my financial situation and cementing my future plans of success and happiness. Clowning was my mystical golden goose, ever-laying precious nuggets that swelled the slow trickle of my monetary funds into a babbling brook.

As my greedy attraction (and bank account) expanded, my list of clientele and scheduled performances lengthened until I was performing several times a month, amassing a semi-regular "fan club" in the process. I face-painted and balloon-twisted at countless festivals, emcee-hosted numerous company banquets and other corporate events, facilitated a handful of summer-camp workshops, and 'clowned around' at so many parties and picnics that any reference to birthday cake made my stomach dry-heave. By all accounts I was a smashing success; and yet I still dreaded the applications of makeup and the changing into various costumes. Prior to each 'gig,' I fervently prayed for rain to flood the outdoor activities or for the cancellation phone-calls from patrons. Responsibilities and 'grown-up' duties such as taxes, invoices, entertainer's insurance, and accountability piled heavily upon my shoulders, sucking dry my waning energy until my very bones ached.

Once I had persuaded them that I was not suicidal, only wearied and burned-out, my parents rocked me like an infant and told me that it was time for a break, suggesting that I reevaluate my priorities. I decided that it was time for a change-of-pace, but not necessarily a change in my self-employed, highly profitable line-of-work. My clowning hours were cut in half, and I chose to perform at only the least time-consuming, yet most profitable, events and 'gigs.' Unfortunately, nothing seemed to restore my dwindling supply of emotional strength and physical energy. Somewhere along the lines, clowning deviated from the path leading towards a river of opportunities into a whirlpool of overwhelming burdens.

At one particular gig-a weekly routine of balloon-twisting at a dine-in restaurant-I finally received an epiphany, a jolting change-of-heart that forever altered my perceptions on clowning.
I was twisting latex balloons into cat-shaped objects, (all the while eyeing the clock on the wall and counting down the minutes until closing time), when someone timidly tapped me on the shoulder. I turned, somewhat impatiently, to the lanky woman wearing an elaborate, yet severely outdated hairstyle. Before I could wearily ask her to join the line of other sheepish adults waiting with their whining children, she gestured towards a mournful group of people sitting at a corner booth.

"Hazel Nut," she said, "my brother was in a car accident." Her voice cracked. "I don't know if he's going to make it." I finally noticed her worn, red-rimmed eyes, the haggard weariness of her posture, and felt a sharp tug at my heart-strings. When she saw that she had my full, undivided attention, she continued in an undertone.

"I brought his wife and kids here so that they could meet you. I just know that you can cheer them up." She looked me straight in the eyes. I don't remember if I verbally responded or even slightly nodded my head, but I do vividly recall the intense nervousness that vibrated up my spine and resounded throughout my body, causing my ears to ring. The fact that she had so much confidence in my comedic abilities shook me to the core.

Suddenly, the scales fell from my eyes. Sure, I had known all along that my job was to make others laugh, but I had never truly realized the full significance of the role. Because of their goofy exterior, clowns inspire trust, causing people to relax their guards and truly experience joy and humor. Clowns are able to reach out, farther than mere humans, into and beyond tightly-walled comfort zones and straight into the hearts of people. By smearing greasepaint on my face and pulling on brightly-colored rags, I was being given the opportunity to impact the world.
Humbled, staggering beneath a wealth of new concepts, yet fully armed with this knowledge, I tiptoed over to the corner table. The youngest child looked up and nudged his siblings. As one, they stared wide-eyed as I waved my balloon pump and widened my grin. Somehow, I knew that the next few minutes would be the most difficult of my clowning career, yet they would also help me figure out if I was capable of positively impacting others, without any regard to how I might look to others or how much I might be paid afterwards.

Soon, their table was covered with the finest creations that I could muster and the children were cracking small grins at my jokes. Due to their mother's sullen mood, however, any smiles were erased before they could blossom into giggles. Whenever I glanced into the mother's tear-filled eyes, I felt strangely moved to embrace her. However, I was able to shake off the notion. Finally, I was forced to admit defeat. Disappointed, and acutely aware of my inability to shake off

any sense of failure as I had always been able to do before, I gathered up my supplies. As I turned away, the mother sniffled. Impulsively, I knelt and bear-hugged her. Seemingly as surprised as I was by my actions, she hugged me back. Then, her kids wrapped their arms around us. When the group awkwardly released their hold, I once again said my farewells and turned to leave. As I did so, I tripped on a piece of loose carpeting, tumbled to the floor, and rose to my feet crying, "Ta Da!" Amid the shrieks from the children, I heard the sweetest sound in the world-the mother's soft laughter.

For the rest of the evening, I managed-to my immense delight-to make a complete fool out of myself. While I didn't receive a large monetary tip, the smiles, hugs, and belly-laughs that I did collect were the best rewards and most memorable experiences of my clowning career. That night, I discovered that children's entertainment has multiple facets and isn't just about the quick cash or fame. 'Clowning around' sometimes involves "self-torture" and "self-humiliation," but only in order to bring humor to the humorless. The demanding responsibilities weed out the greedy weak-willed and serve to strengthen the resolves of those compassionate, true entertainers-at-heart. Most of time, however, clowning contains hidden joys and gifts just awaiting discovery.

It shames me to look back on times when "Hazel Nut," my inner child/clown, wasn't such a major aspect of my life. Without her, it was difficult to laugh at my own mistakes, making earthly problems much more unbearable. I didn't have the confidence to reach out and impact the lives of others, bringing laughter to the brokenhearted. Most importantly, I was unable to focus on anything but my own selfish ideals, leaving any grandiose life-missions or dreams unfulfilled and unrealized. Clowning makes it possible for me to accomplish the greatest deed of all: bringing smiles to those who are troubled or broken-hearted. Through my experiences as "Hazel Nut," I became an open conduit for humor. After all, laughter is the only natural remedy that falls like sweet, refreshing rain, cleansing wounds no ordinary remedy has the power to heal.

Erika Galluppi

THE LEASE

I leased my soul to Satan
For nine ninety-nine ninety-nine.
What was left of my inspiration
Went down with a glass of red wine.
I called my nearest neighbors
To come and be close for my wake,
But when they saw me standing naked
They knew that they'd made a mistake.
I didn't have a lawyer,
But neither did Satan - in fact,
We quite simply shook hands and I turned
(Though one shouldn't show Satan her back)
And he laughed
And I left
Knowing what
Would come next.
'Cause a four year lease
Is a difficult beast,
But then in the end
It's for rental again,
And the walls will get paint,
Make a soul a new saint.
And the past is gone past,
And it never comes back.

Megan Brown

untitled

Total contact is an entire being -

one.

Simple merging of infinite places that don't exist

in reality.

Liquid chasing of drops

that blend

and roll

into one current.

In its own hand,

contact is lost.

Lost in wilderness,

lost in dark,

lost in secret.

The power to find

is confused

in its own hand.

Total contact is lost -

only with goodbye.

Michelle Fitzgerald

MOMENT OF SOLACE

Dark and cold
The night may seem
But in it I find
A place to dream.

Hang my heart
On my shoe rack
Leaving heavy thoughts
Behind the book stack.
Walk out on the artful playscape.
Sitting on
The pinewood floor
Listening to the silence roar
Dew mist nipping
At my toes
Frizzy hairs waltzing
Over my nose.
Sitting with the fair dance of nature.

Audrey Rouse

BLACK

It is there
I cannot see
But taste
not to quench
The thirst will never die
until we fill our mouths
with hypocrisy
Black tar
Sticky like honey
stuck on our lips
and it is that we blame
we cannot see
through the haze
of our own smoke -
we resound our fathers
and theirs
Some strive
for difference
Only to repeat
that they heard
in some bygone year - -

And finally, our hands
Turn black
with smut
It too
is sticky
and with it
our hands are stuck
On that one lascivious thing
We chose to touch
Black -
Like homemade sin
Blacktopping our future...
We baptize ourselves in black
and become stuck.

Emily Keplar

Auction

A girl has been put on auction today.
You thought that the sale of human beings
Ended with the abolition of slavery
And with jealous little boys
Trying to get rid of their new baby sisters?
No, look, there she stands
On the platform in front of you - and there she'll be
Every weekend and week night.
Don't push one another and fight -
I guarantee you will each
Receive a piece of her.
You must learn to share
If you want any stock
In what she's got.
Don't be angry at her
For only having so much of herself to give.

She didn't put herself up there, you know.
So, all who want to be buyers,
Raise your voices to this choir.
You might manage to get away with
Three quarters of her,
If you shout loudly enough...
Or you might even earn it
If you're the first
To prove that you really know
What she's worth.

Allison Merkle

LIVING WITH A MONSTER

She sat at her computer, fingers poised and ready to write her final paper of the year ... but nothing came. Her mind was far too distracted to even attempt to write her paper. Monsters.

"What do these writers know about monsters?" she said to herself as she fingered her copy of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. "Monsters don't have to be ugly. Monsters don't just come from science. They come in all shapes and sizes, and they tend to create themselves." She sighed and began looking through her copy of Einstein's Monsters and took another deep breath as her husband opened the front door and promptly began screaming for Darlene.

Darlene jumped up from the computer desk and spun around just in time to see Daryl walk into the computer room with his eyes full of fire.

"How was your day, honey?" Darlene said, hiding her fear under the mask of her practiced cheerful disposition. Daryl's response was not vocal, nor was it even verbal. He merely lunged at her, grabbed her shirt and pulled her into the kitchen.

His voice was dark and sinister as he pushed her towards the kitchen table. "When I come home from a long day of work I expect to see my wife putting my dinner on the table!" His face was merely inches from hers as he snarled, "What good are you if you can't even have my dinner on the table?"

Darlene's breath was heavy and labored as she tried to move past his large form that had taken on "superhuman" aspects as his anger had emerged. As Victor Frankenstein had seen of the monster, Daryl's "stature...seemed to exceed that of a man." She began to envision her love as the monster that plagued Victor. His eyes going cold and bleak, his body taking on unnatural proportions, his internal ugliness seeping out through his pores. As her face went blank with thought Daryl's rage only grew hotter and he hit her across the face sending her onto the cold tile flooring.

"What's wrong with you?" he screamed as he stood over her crumpled and crying form. "Why do you make me hit you? Why are you so stupid?" She didn't move; she lay there, sobbing. "Get up and get my dinner ready before I hit you again!"

She started to slowly pull herself to her feet and make her way to the kitchen to remove dinner from the oven where it had been cooling. As she did the cool air in the apartment stung against her face where her husband had struck her. Her mind was reeling, trying to make his anger not real. She tried to hide behind her schoolwork, using her mind to soothe her body.

She began to think of her lover as a nuclear bomb. His passionate nature had turned into a rage that rivaled the explosion at Hiroshima. His violent outbursts sent a mushroom cloud of sorrow above their happy new life together and turned both man and wife into something other than human beings. It was not possible to be human beings "on the other side of the firebreak." Darlene saw the explosive nature of her marriage as a form of mutually assured destruction. If they stayed together he would grow more violent and evil and destroy himself by his own actions. She would be destroyed by his anger as well, but her destruction would be far more violent and volatile.

She sat silently through dinner, watching her husband eat his dinner and she began to imagine him as a green glob of badly put together dead tissue that had been reanimated by some mad scientist. The heat which emanated from him in his quiet sulking, brooding anger continued to simmer as she began clearing the table and doing the dishes. It was as if her loving husband had mutated into a walking nuclear reactor. His eyes were the uncovered cores that burned into her as he stared at her with laser precision. She felt like Dan in the story "Insight at Flame Lake," like she was breathing fire and the sounds of nature around her were merely background radiation. As she was putting the last of the dishes away she dropped a small glass on the floor. It was the final piece of the puzzle that led to his core meltdown.

He leapt up from the living room chair where he sat and ran at her. She had such little time to react that when he tried to spin her around she fell forward and cut her arms on the glass she was trying to sweep up.

"You stupid bitch, "he screamed," can't you do anything right?"

Darlene was crying hard as she tried to keep the blood off the floor and still speedily clean up the glass; her lack of response only angered her lover more and his strength took on new proportions as he grabbed the back of her shirt and pulled up her upright. He grabbed the broom and threatened her with it. He screamed but to her the words were inaudible, as if they were chaotic sounds of people preparing for a massive explosion. As his yelling ceased his fists began to fly, like missiles in the night. His strength was superhuman and as he broke her bones and battered her body she felt like a child in the grasp of an undead monster.

Days later, she lay in a hospital bed recovering and in protective custody. Her husband had been arrested for beating his wife and she was in the process of filing for divorce. She had written her final paper while in the hospital and mailed it to her English professor.

"Frankenstein's monster and the nuclear bomb were created by man, both with the purpose of doing good for the world. Their actions, while full of good intentions, wound up hurting more people than they ever could have helped. Modern day monsters follow this same pattern in many ways. My monster, my soon to be ex-husband, thought he was making our life better by beating me, and wound up nearly killing me. Are monsters real? Yes, I've shared a bed with one. Are they always ugly? No, monsters become ugly due to their actions. Frankenstein's monster was ugly on the outside, but beautiful on the inside until provoked by lack of love from his creator. My husband was beautiful on the outside and ugly on the inside, no matter what I did. For Dan in "Insight at Fire Lake" monstrosity came from emotional and mental anguish caused by his father's involvement in working with nuclear weapons. The emotional scarring and psychological problems caused by his father's contact with radiation turned the world into a place full of monsters and caused him to believe his cousin was tempting him to go into the fire lake with her. Like Dan, I fooled myself into believing one thing was true and let my own internal monsters dictate how I acted. And, like Dan, I suffered the consequences in a most dire way."

She slowly drifted off to sleep, finally knowing she was safe. She no longer lived with a monster.

Sam Collins

THE EYE OF TIME

My mother gave me her eyes,

Cobalt and smattered with almost as many

specks of silver,

Pupils unblemished at first sight,

Wisdom filled and confronted by life.

I gave you your eyes,

Cobalt and smattered with fewer specks of silver,

Perfect pupils, entirely unscathed,

Wide open and ready to see.

Jennifer Rose

You're sweet like surprises

And hopeful like Peace

Successful like ethics

And calming like sleep

You break my defenses

And strengthen my will

Resolve my disaster

And warm out
the chill

You speak to
my senses

And call out
my grace

Remove
inhibition

And brighten
my space

You awe and
inspire me

And make me aware

Impress and astound me

And treat me with care

You live in my world now

As I live in thine

Make no fault about it

I'm yours and you're mine

Megan Brown

DESOLATE

Emily Keplar

Like the arid wasteland
Harsh winds
Desert sun
I feel desolate
Continually pushing on
Pushing earth aside
with my bare feet
Scorched and burning
Shimmers arise
From the past
I could swim
If only I would fall
to where the flowers
grow, waterless,
through the sand.
I can feel my feet
Sinking
through the arid tides
The delirium
caused by the fall
Still -

I push the earth aside
with my bare feet
to climb upon the high
dunes
Like Ocean's wrath
through her waves
On it high
I lift my arms
And dream...
dream of freedom
From the burden
of this barren land.

I Have Loved a Beast

I have loved a beast

His beady eyes and crimson smile

His void filling ways

He keeps my dark secrets

A replacement for my confidants

A friend who never leaves

Whispered implication-

His lies, I believe

He will make me pleasing.

I have loved a beast

Until he made waste of me.

Brown and splotched my skin

Clumps of hair he ripped from my head

Pounded my soul with anguish

Left me with a dying hunger

A skin mass-

Of pain and broken tears.

Loved a beast did I,

And to love him is easy

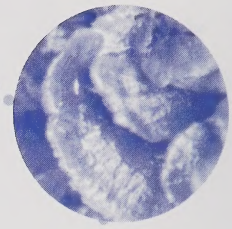
Like vanishing into a grave

But to not love him sets me free:

To choose without him-to love me.

Audrey Rouse

SHE BELIEVES



Minutes pass and hours turn

Slow like lasting embers burn

She believes like one who calls

Upon the wind to dash it all

And here in motion she shall pass

It will go by all too fast

She believes like one who's chaste

Slipping in and out of waste

Chant her mantra, calm her fears

Shed light upon her falling tears

She believes like one who knows

So the wise old legend goes

She has secrets she won't share

Wound and bound up in her hair

She believes like one who gives

Despite the boundaries where she lives

In her bed and in her heart

Dashed to pieces, torn apart

She believes like one who prays

That this man shall be the one who stays

Megan Brown